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## Mapping movement landscapes in South Africa

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### ABSTRACT

The concept of a movement landscape is used to analyse continuities and changes in popular mobilization since the end of formal apartheid. Focusing on four different episodes of protest since 1997, the article examines their relationship to the ANC movement and traditions, and their organizational forms. It finds a general theme of fluid and ephemeral organization, and a distrust of formal hierarchical organization, that is relatively new in South Africa. The Marikana strikes produced the most far-reaching organizational realignments, while the student struggles generated the most innovative re-imaginings of political forms and discourses. It concludes that although there have been critiques of and challenges to the ANC tradition, and experiments with new forms of organizing, they have not produced alternatives that have lasted or dislodged the dominant approaches defined and popularized by the ANC movement.

### KEYWORDS

ANC; collective action; movement landscape; organization; 'post-apartheid'; protest; social movements

Two decades of electoral democracy in South Africa have been accompanied by cycles of contention that have deployed both collective action and strategic litigation based on the new regime of constitutional rights created in the negotiated transition to democracy (1991–1996). The intensity of contention and popular mobilization has led some to consider South Africa the 'protest capital of the world' (Alexander, 2010, 2012a); and events such as the Marikana massacre and the subsequent strike wave (2012–2014), and the student movements of 2015–2016 have been discussed as 'turning points' in popular struggle (Alexander, 2013). Yet, none of these events has produced a decisive rupture with the dominant politics of the Congress Alliance led by the African National Congress (ANC), despite a steady decline in electoral support for the ANC over these decades (Veriava, 2015).

With this article, we explore four distinct forms or episodes of popular mobilization, in an effort to surface both the reproduction of older organizational forms and practices and the partial emergence of what appear to be new repertoires and organizational forms which may portend some kind of reorientation of popular struggle. This is a partial selection determined by familiarity – our own research and that of close colleagues, as well as activist participation – with a view to comparing a variety of different kinds of movements, periods, and sites of struggle. In this article, we do not aim to scan the entire range of movements active in South Africa, nor do we engage in a comprehensive review of the literature. Rather, we seek to drill down into four promising case studies in a search for common features and new departures.

The concept we develop in order to think through the problem is that of a movement landscape (Cox, 2016a, 2016b).<sup>1</sup> A movement landscape constitutes the terrain on which popular mobilization and movements have to make themselves visible and position themselves in order to pursue their

goals. We can identify two elements of a movement landscape. The movement landscape is shaped by successive histories of popular struggle, which crystallize in particular organizational structures, and lay down patterns of grievances or claims, repertoires of mobilization and action, and the symbolic forms and languages, as well as the silences, which tend to define what may or may not be articulated and heard. Such a landscape is shaped not only from below, but also by institutions, authorities, and elites from above – regimes of citizenship, institutions of democracy, rights that may be enshrined in constitutions and laws, promises and policies, systems of certification, recognition and regulation that legitimate certain organizations and claims, and derecognize or delegitimize others. Importantly, movement landscapes reflect ongoing contestation over what is considered to be political and about what is thought to be possible through political struggle. Popular forms of political engagement may push up against these limits, or transgress them, redefining the terms of engagement between elites and subalterns and substantially altering the movement landscape. They may, in other words, reproduce prevailing terms of incorporation, negotiate an alteration to them, transgress them profoundly, or even on occasion produce a rupture that substantially alters political relations. The concept of movement landscape is intended to capture therefore the durability of the current order of things as well as the change – erosion, fracture, the sedimentation of new projects and practices, and the ruptures of formative events which may dramatically tear apart and reconfigure landscapes (Roseberry, 1994).

The concept of a movement landscape is intended to provide a perspective that overcomes some of the limitations of the dominant ‘contentious politics’ school of social movement analysis noted by several scholars (for example, Barker, 2013; Barker et al., 2013; Burawoy, 2017; Gabowitsch, 2017; Runciman, 2017; Zibechi, 2012), and draws attention to history, durability, and change, locates a movement in relation to the variety of different movements, and assumes a fluidity of networks and porosity of boundaries among movements as well as between movements, elites, and states.

We argue that the negotiated transition in South Africa (1990–1996) constituted a formative event as envisaged above, through which the black majority were incorporated as citizens, a new constitution elaborating the rule of law was drafted, and the ANC was enshrined as the dominant political force both in the institutional structures of the new order, as well as informally through deeply rooted networks across society. The ANC is deeply implicated in the founding of the new order, this position cemented not only by its historical role in achieving liberation and negotiating a new order, but also by a wide range of government policies and patronage systems, securing a variety of pathways for elite formation and enrichment, as well as a degree of redistribution to subalterns. Celebrated as ‘the democratic breakthrough’ by ANC leaders, over time few would remember this founding moment as the outcome of a negotiated settlement, a set of compromises, rather than a straightforward triumph.

Our working argument is that the constitutive moment of democratic transition laid down the basic contours of the movement landscape, in the form of both new rights and institutions, as well as the deep histories of popular struggle through which the transition to democracy was produced. Thus, the new democratic institutions of citizenship, participation, and incorporation dramatically restructured the apartheid movement landscape, incorporating movement constituencies in unprecedented ways and establishing new spaces and constraints. This does not mean that the history of struggle is irrelevant to the movement landscape. On the contrary, the organizational forms, repertoires, and symbolic power that were mobilized in the ANC tradition over some 80 years of struggle, but most importantly during the 1980s, continue to define and shape popular struggles today with paradoxical effects – reproducing allegiance to the ANC while providing memories, repertoires, and claims that may be mobilized against it (Hart, 2013).

Analogous founding moments characterize each of the BRICS countries, whether these emerged from decolonization, Communist revolution, or democratic transitions from dictatorship (see Cox, 2016a, for the Irish case as a postcolonial society).

The question this article seeks to answer, therefore, is to what extent post-apartheid struggles and movements are contained within and reproduce the movement landscape and the relationships embedded within it, and, conversely, to what extent they transgress such limits. A large part of the movement landscape organized around the ANC constellation of organizations (or ‘Congress’)<sup>2</sup> is deeply shaped by the history of the national liberation movement. More informally, ANC networks ramify through society, influential in professional associations, religious organizations, black business forums, and so on. This is the organizational terrain on which – and against which – popular mobilizations and protests take shape, thus providing a set of organizations, repertoires, symbolic powers, and landmarks – a set of understandings which are mutually intelligible by activists, communities, elites, and the state – but also a set of constraints, limitations, and silences which it is difficult to transgress. Indeed, transgression may carry high costs.

Our examination of four different sets of popular mobilization in this article proceeds along two axes – relation with the Congress constellation of organizations, and forms of organizing – as these provide strong indicators for assessing the question we have set ourselves: whether any of these mobilizations begin to break the organic relationship between popular mobilization and Congress politics laid down in the movement landscape. The first axis of enquiry in turn opens up two questions – first, the question of the organizational relationship with the Congress constellation and, second, the relationship with Congress traditions of mobilization. The four mobilizations we discuss include:

- The ‘new social movements’<sup>3</sup> that emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s,
- the localized community protests which started to become something of a wave from the mid-2000s,
- the Marikana massacre in 2012 and the strikes and organizational shockwaves this produced,
- and the mass movement of students and workers that mobilized at universities in 2015/2016.

We examine each of these mobilizations in sequence, precisely in order to understand whether there is any continuity or resonance between them, and whether or not new repertoires, organizational forms, or landmarks are being laid down in the movement.

## 1. Contesting the terms of democracy – ‘new social movements’

The idea that 1994 was a ‘democratic breakthrough’ was limited by the ascent of neoliberal policies and logics globally. In spite of fierce contestation from within the party and the broader alliance, in 1996, the ANC government adopted a neoliberal macro-economic policy framework that would constrain the possibilities for change (Bond, 2000; Marais, 2001). With the framework declared ‘non-negotiable’ by their leaders, members of the Congress movement who continued to be critical of its adoption in public spaces outside of the movement were labelled ‘ill-disciplined’ and heavily censured, most often expelled. By the end of the 1990s, many of these (and other disgruntled) activists found allies amongst different groups of people brought together by their common experience of the various negative effects of this policy turn – township residents unable to pay for basic services demanding an end to their being cut off from water and electricity and evicted from their homes as the logics of commodification and privatization were enforced; people living and working with

HIV/AIDS unable to afford the cost of anti-retrovirals and care more generally as state spending on health was cut; workers retrenched as a result of trade liberalization policies and privatization; workers in contract, seasonal, part-time, casual, and outsourced jobs as the regime of flexible labour took hold; people affected in different ways by the 'willing buyer, willing seller' approach to land redistribution.

Between 1997 and 2006, then, the movement landscape was dotted with eruptions of protests that over time provided the conditions for the emergence of more formal and structured organizations through which ongoing and sustained action and intervention could be facilitated. The Anti-Privatization Forum (APF), the Concerned Citizens' Forum (CCF), and the Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC) were established in Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town, respectively, in struggles for free basic services. At a national level, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) emerged to fight for free anti-retrovirals and other necessary resources for people living with HIV/AIDS, and the Landless People's Movement (LPM) was formed to co-ordinate struggles related to land and farm work.

Together representing the first set of movements to emerge outside of the Congress tradition after 1994, they were referred to as the 'new social movements' (Ballard, Habib, & Valodia, 2006; McKinley & Naidoo, 2004; Naidoo & Veriava, 2005). Although these movements might have been critical of the ANC government and leadership of the alliance for facilitating these policy shifts, a majority of their members came from Congress structures. This often saw the framing of demands by these movements around the claim that the ANC government was not fulfilling the mandate it inherited from the liberation movement by moving away from commitments made during the struggle against apartheid. It also meant that their political repertoires and organizational forms and cultures often resembled or drew from those of Congress formations (Naidoo & Veriava, 2005; Runciman 2012, 2015).

But these movements were also usually open spaces to which anyone could belong regardless of their political affiliation. This meant, then, that there were debates within these movements about political orientation (in particular to the different formations making up the ANC alliance) as members from Black Consciousness, Pan Africanist, and various socialist and Marxist traditions came into conversation with ANC members as well as individuals who chose not to align to any formal political party or tradition. Depending on the relationship of its founding members and leaders to the ANC and its alliance partners, and the nature of the issues being taken up in its struggles, each movement adopted its own modes of critical engagement with the ANC and its aligned formations (Dwyer, 2004; Naidoo & Veriava, 2005).

Across this set of movements, the immediacy of the problems at the heart of the protests produced approaches that combined both legal and illegal forms of action, demonstrating the simultaneous turn to the law and other processes promising redress through state institutions and policies, and the turn to past practices employed in the struggle against apartheid, such as the illegal reconnection of houses to water and electricity. In the struggles against neoliberal approaches, this repertoire grew to include the destruction of prepaid water meters as well as the illegal bypassing of prepaid electricity meters, and campaigns of defiance that openly disobeyed laws protecting the interests of transnational capital over those of poor people across the globe. In the collectivization and politicization of such acts, movements provided a counter discourse and logic to that of privatization, commodification, and trade liberalization, drawing boldly on commitments made in the liberation movement to free access to the resources necessary for a good life (Desai, 2002; Friedman & Mottiar, 2004; Naidoo & Veriava, 2005; Van Heusden & Pointer, 2005).

The main differences across this set of movements (also often reflected within movements) related to organizational forms, and contestation of national and local government elections. Both speak to

conflicting understandings and imaginings of politics and possibilities for political space. Disagreements over the value of hierarchical versus non-hierarchical structures, and the need for leaders versus more collective and participatory forms of decision-making, tended to dominate. Ultimately, the shape and form that a collective took changed over time, and was influenced by past organizational experiences of members, the character of the issues and engagements it was involved in, and the dominant political traditions and ideological dispositions of its members. These debates were also influenced by practices in the alter-globalization movement, a coming together of groups across the world challenging the adoption of neoliberal policies.

Notwithstanding differences, by 2001, as the fight against neoliberal policies grew globally, it was clear that in South Africa too, there was a set of movements questioning and acting against the neoliberal policy reforms of the ANC government. This was perhaps most starkly evident in 2001 and 2002 when over 20,000 people marched during the World Conference Against Racism and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, respectively, both United Nations conferences hosted by the South African government. Both times, the aim was to highlight and demand an end to the adoption of neoliberal policies, which, in South Africa, they argued, perpetuated racism and prevented sustainable development. For the first time since 1994, the movement landscape was coloured by a collective force outside of the ANC that saw the coming together of very different groups in a common stand against neoliberal policies (Desai, 2002; Naidoo, 2002; Naidoo & Veriava, 2005).

But by 2006, most of these movements were in decline or no longer in existence. Increasing state repression took its toll, and the state's incorporation of certain of their demands immobilized some. Other factors included power struggles between different political factions, and the poor handling of conflict over race, class, and gender differences, as well as over control of increasing amounts of donor money. Nevertheless, many of the affiliate community formations that made up these movements survived at a local level (McKinley, 2012; Naidoo & Veriava, 2013). Some, influenced by the new legal and democratic institutions in the landscape, over time came to resemble NGOs more than social movements. Although the impact of these movements continues to be felt in the lives of the poor and vulnerable, their fragility in sustaining co-ordinated action across a range of local level formations was ultimately revealed in their decline.

## 2. Community protests

A pattern of community protests started emerging outside the structures of formal social movements such as the APF around 2004, though in many instances, they were raising issues similar to those raised by the preceding social movements. Isolated protests of this kind had taken place since the 1990s, but from 2005 there was a steady increase, with a sharp spike to a new and sustained level of protests in 2009 (Alexander, 2012a; Municipal IQ, 2012, 2017; Runciman et al., 2016).

In most instances, protests have been directed against local municipal authorities governed by the ANC and mobilized over grievances including housing, water and other municipal services, lack of jobs, corruption over the allocation of houses and plots, or the disappearance of municipal funds and lack of responsiveness from authorities. Typically, protests take the form of a series of marches, the presentation of memoranda of grievances, and mass community meetings, and may escalate to include work stayaways, street barricades, running battles with the police, and burning of municipal buildings or municipal councillors' homes (Alexander, 2010, 2012b; Langa & von Holdt, 2012; Von Holdt, 2014; Von Holdt et al., 2011).

A study of the internal life of the networks and crowds that emerge during these episodes of protest reveals a complex amalgam of relatively autonomous mobilization and action from below



together with elite politics from above (Langa & von Holdt, 2012; Von Holdt et al., 2011). The study found a variety of organizational forms – for example, the ANC Youth League, the SACP, the South African National Civic Organization, and residents’ committees – all sharing a deep connection with ANC networks and structures. Grievances were real and the popular protests had mass support and were characterized by popular initiative. Yet, paradoxically, protest participants were often dismissive of protest leaders, commenting that they were pursuing their own interests, specifically electoral office in the town council or preferential access to council resources and tenders. The ANC councillors who were targets of the protests made the same allegations. Notwithstanding this cynicism, thousands of residents participated in protests and marches. And in the aftermath of the protests, protest leaders were indeed frequently incorporated in the local council or municipal administration, provided with access to tenders or deployed into positions in the ANC constellation with minor benefits. The protest movements themselves reveal – and are shaped by – a fierce intra-elite struggle over processes of elite formation through access to lucrative jobs, resources, and patronage networks.<sup>4</sup>

The masses of residents are not passive victims of this process, though. They demonstrate their own ability to put pressure on the leaders, call them to account, and initiate actions such as stay-aways, marches, and street battles autonomously. Recognizing that the ANC is the dominant organization in local institutions and in the community, they make use of elite leaders in order to be recognized and heard by powerholders within the ANC, just as much as the leaders position themselves in protests to establish a constituency and a power base through which to challenge incumbents and reconfigure relations within the local structures. Elements of this tension are discernible in the following quote from a protest leader:

We could see that what the community was fighting for was genuine, and that as members of the ANC Youth League we were quiet about this thing. Why can’t we tap into this thing and start channelling this thing to right directions within us here as the ANC? We did that.

The protest movements thus have a *dual character* (Langa & von Holdt, 2012; for similar arguments see Dawson, 2014, 2017; and Mukwede & Ndlovu, 2017), and it is these tensions between mobilization from below and positioning from above that shape the trajectories of protest.

The organizational picture that emerges in the aftermath of protests is of the durability of the formal structures of the ANC constellation and the relatively ephemeral nature of autonomous community-based structures. None of these cases produced enduring community-based organizations or movements whose primary focus is on representing, organizing, and mobilizing residents. What they did leave, however, were a legacy of organizational forms and organizational repertoires – ranging from formal ANC-linked structures to informal and nominally independent ones – which could once again be appropriated for popular mobilization when the need arose.

To sum up, then, many community protests take place through structures and activist networks located within the ANC constellation of organizations. Both leaders and subalterns situate their struggles on the terrain of the ANC, deploying recognizable repertoires, symbols, and discourses of struggle, appearing to reproduce the forms and landmarks of the movement landscape. Nonetheless, these dynamics of incorporation are inflected by tensions and new repertoires as well. The localized community protest movement in South Africa has forged an innovation in the movement landscape – that is, the appropriation of ANC networks and structures to mobilize protest, and with increasing frequency, violent protest, against other ANC networks and structures, partly in the service of factional struggles, but also in the service of raising the grievances and demands of communities. By so doing it destabilizes the ANC, legitimates popular agency, and raises grievances

and demands that elites may prefer to be silenced. This is an enduring and expanding set of repertoires, as evidenced by the escalation in community protests over the past decade.

It is important to highlight the moment of autonomy that is present as a tension in many such protests – the networks and actions from below that put pressure on protest leaders and escalate the momentum of popular action – and the fact that some among the protest leadership are more responsive to these dynamics than others who are focused on their own trajectories towards power. These aspects suggest the potential that is present in localized community protest for a break with the ANC as the terrain of protest, and the ever-present possibility of new organizational forms and repertoires which present alternatives to the ANC.

### 3. Marikana and the remaking of the trade union movement

In August 2012, the South African police shot and killed 34 striking mine workers at Marikana, part of the platinum belt which stretches across the northern provinces of South Africa and is the site of multiple social transformations driven by the massive expansion of the platinum mining industry. The Marikana massacre occurred at the midpoint of a wave of mass strikes that in turn shook each of the three biggest platinum mining companies in the world during that year. The following account draws from an extensive literature that has already been published on these events (including Alexander, Sinwell, Lekgowa, Mmope, & Xezwi, 2013; Chinguno, 2013, 2015a, 2015b; Sinwell, 2013, 2015; Sinwell & Mbatha, 2016).

In all three cases, the strikes were led by independent worker committees, bypassing or directly attacking the workplace structures of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), which since the 1980s had been the dominant mining union and the biggest affiliate of COSATU. Violent conflict between strikers and NUM representatives escalated, and eventually, the union collapsed across most of the platinum belt, to be replaced by a small breakaway, the Amalgamated Mining and Construction Workers Union (AMCU).

Why did the organizational structures of the NUM collapse so dramatically across the three mining companies? Chinguno (2015a) provides us with a detailed critique of the way the union shaft stewards, officials, and structures had been incorporated into management structures and practices, with shaft stewards and office bearers benefiting from access to improved salaries, advanced training, the opportunity to dispense patronage in the form of jobs and accommodation, and clear promotion paths into management. Deepened institutionalization led to ‘class capture’ and growing anger towards the union for its failure to respond to worker issues (see also Sinwell, 2015, pp. 597–599).

Thus the strikes took the form of wildcat ‘unprotected’ actions, organized outside of and against the procedures and institutions of the industrial relations system that had been established post-apartheid, and that in turn was based on many of the procedures, forums, and rights that had been fought for and established in practice by the union movement in the anti-apartheid struggles of the 1980s. Furthermore, the demands they made breached the tacit understandings of long-established negotiating practices.

But the demands represented a symbolic rejection of the established collective-bargaining system and its wage increases that tend to oscillate around a figure just above inflation – and a claim for a much greater share of the wealth generated by mining. Management responded with mass dismissals, refusal to negotiate, and the deployment of security and police. Ultimately, the strikes led to a rupture with the Tripartite Alliance and the ANC, though it did not start out that way. Workers were rejecting their union, not the ANC. However, the NUM was an important organization in the



Alliance, the biggest union in COSATU, and one of the staunchest supporters of the ANC in the federation. In the end, COSATU, the ANC, and the SA Communist Party all swung behind the NUM, castigating the workers variously as anarchists, lumpen proletarians, and party to a management plot or to a 'third force' attack on the ANC. After the Marikana massacre, government, the ANC, and the Communist Party came out in support of the police action against the strikers and the ANC. It was clear that the strike was regarded as transgressive, provoking multiple mechanisms of delegitimation and justifying the use of extreme state violence.

By 2013, all three of the companies were negotiating recognition agreements with AMCU, which had displaced the NUM as the majority union. By 2014, AMCU was the dominant union across the platinum belt. Committee members became shaft stewards and office bearers in the new union's branches. Nonetheless, there were continuing tensions between committee members and the union, particularly its national leadership, as they accused it of imposing top-down decisions and operating in a way that was analogous to the NUM. In at least two of the companies – Impala and Anglo Platinum – elements of the worker committees continue to meet autonomously from the union in order to preserve a degree of worker independence.

The attack on central institutions of the post-apartheid industrial relations order and the formation of independent worker committees was clearly a break with key features of the movement landscape established in the era of democracy, though it had roots in the apartheid period. On the platinum belt, independent committees had organized under extreme repression and were pre-cursors to the introduction of the NUM, and in other unions had frequently been organized in an attempt to maintain control over shop stewards from below (von Holdt 2003). While these innovations in the 2012 strikes were reabsorbed into the industrial relations system with the recognition of AMCU, the 2012 events had broader repercussions, ultimately producing new organizations outside the ANC constellation and severely weakening it in the labour field.

Thus, the Marikana strikes inaugurated a series of ruptures in the movement landscape, throwing into question key industrial relations institutions, reducing the NUM, and weakening COSATU and the Congress constellation, producing a new labour federation and providing momentum for a small but robust left-wing political challenge to ANC domination in the form of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). Yet, these organizational initiatives continue to reproduce important elements of ANC traditions, deploying these against the ANC constellation. The new labour Federation, dominated by former COSATU affiliates, is led by a former COSATU general secretary, and its launch was marked by the singing of COSATU and ANC songs. The EFF claims to represent the 'real' ANC and its vision, enshrined in the Freedom Charter. The Marikana strikes came to constitute a transgressive struggle, an assertion that the established 'order of things', and specifically its distribution of wealth and poverty, was no longer acceptable. Workers drew on subaltern understandings, rather than confining themselves to the standards of 'reason' embodied in the institutions and organizations of the official landscape. These constitute an active legacy in the evolving movement landscape.

#### 4. From hashtags to movements?

The newest additions to the movement landscape are student collectives that have grown from mobilizations popularized through hashtags – #TransformWits, #RhodesMustFall, #Outsourcing-MustFall, #FeesMustFall – which have been analysed in vivid accounts by student activists themselves (Chinguno et al., 2017; Langa, 2017). Led by a new generation of mainly students and younger workers, these protests have been significant for how they have mobilized old repertoires from across the political spectrum in a very new context and through very new forms of media.

They have made institutions of higher learning ‘sites of struggle’<sup>5</sup> once again, and returned society to battles lost in the early 2000s, including struggles against outsourcing and for free education,<sup>6</sup> as universities started to reorganize along neoliberal lines. Social media facilitated the mobilization of students who would not ordinarily have joined a protest led by the Student Representative Council, and the simplicity of the slogan ‘Fees Must Fall’ appealed to a majority of students across all kinds of differences, without any particular political or ideological framing (for student accounts, see Malabala, 2017; Mashibini, 2017; Ndlovu, 2017). At the same time, however, songs, slogans, and icons usually associated with one particular political tradition were appropriated by all and made common to the immediate struggle. For example, the name and history of Solomon Mahlangu, an ANC guerrilla who was executed by the apartheid regime, became so defining of those who gathered in struggle in Senate House at Wits that it was the name they chose to give to the building as part of the process of decolonizing the university (Mthombeni, 2017). And, although the protests may have been started by students involved in formal political organizations, the majority of those who joined and sustained the actions were first-timers to protest.

In these new mobilizations, the dominance of the Congress movement has been questioned as many students turned to Black Consciousness, Pan-Africanism, and Black thought more generally in their grappling with the problems identified with the ANC government. Students called for the ‘decolonization’ of higher education, in particular of the curriculum and institutional cultures. Students identifying as feminist and queer critiqued student organizations for reproducing masculinist, sexist, misogynistic, racist, homophobic, and other exclusionary and prejudicial forms of engagement and organization (Dlakavu, 2017; Jacobs, 2017).

What became the largest of these movements, taking on a national character, began on 13 October 2015, when students at Wits in Johannesburg embarked on protests against a proposed fee increase for 2016 behind the hashtag, #FeesMustFall. Led by elected student leaders who felt let down by the representative structures of governance and decision-making of the university, and joined by outsourced workers engaged in a struggle for inclusion, the protests swelled to unprecedented levels, both at Wits and nationally (Kgoroba, 2017; Mabasa, 2017).

Although the initial protest was led by the Wits Students Representative Council dominated by Congress-aligned formations, it soon overran its origins. In the mass open forums in Solomon House, different political and ideological traditions as well as lived experience and exposure to forms of collective action and protest from the alter-globalization and Occupy movements, produced rich discussions and debates about ‘decolonization’, the plight of ‘the Black child’, and calls for more democratic and less hierarchical forms of organization and decision-making. The presence and contribution of feminists amongst the Black women involved have meant the constant questioning and calling out of patriarchy in its various manifestations within the movements. ‘Intersectionality’ has become part of these discussions as a counter to traditional class analyses that dominate in older movements.

But there were always attempts to control the space by different party political factions, and what might have been productive disagreements often ended in defensive battles between small groups within the common space (Mashibini, 2017). Nevertheless, students were able to unite across their differences, and come together with workers, in mass marches on national government, and occupations and other forms of action at individual institutions, that produced a final agreement to no fee increases in 2016 and a commitment at some institutions (in addition to Wits) to work towards the end of outsourcing. By then, students had deepened their demands to call for free education. But as the ANC and government began to take a firm stand against protesters, a split developed between Congress-aligned student formations, which argued that free education was a

long-term demand and that students should return to class and write exams, and a group of students that grew smaller and smaller over time who kept Solomon House occupied until the holiday period (Ndlovu, 2017). The following year was marked by an escalation of violence on campuses as protesting students were met with brute force by private security and the police, and students turned to violence in response. A significantly new feature of the movement landscape as a result of #Fees-MustFall is the highly securitized character that has come to define the terrain of struggles in higher education.

Today #FeesMustFall is fractured. Party politics has begun to dominate again, and the high levels of securitization on campuses have disabled even the most radical groups of activists. Nevertheless, the movement landscape has been profoundly affected by the emergence of a new generation of student activists and potent new slogans and discourses, such as decolonization, Black Feminism, intersectionality, and radical democracy. It has also successfully brought together in common struggle previously separate groups, such as workers (albeit limited to campus workers) and students, opening up possibilities for the shaping of collective political subjectivities across class divisions, and the production of new political forms and strategies that do not confine themselves to a singular imagination of 'the revolutionary subject' as 'the worker'. #FeesMustFall holds the potential for a different kind of politics, if those who have come together in its name are able to overcome their factionalism and engage more productively with each other in shaping and taking up struggles. In this way, they could reopen possibilities that were long ago foreclosed by the political cultures inherited from the ANC alliance and other parts of the liberation movement and the choices made by the ANC government in relation both to politics and the economy.

## 5. Concluding discussion

In this final section, we try to draw out some of the patterns that emerge across the four distinct mobilizations, and their implications for the movement landscape. It is important to note that while the movement landscape as a concept points towards resonances and connections between movements, it also allows us to specify the contrasting features of different regions of the landscape. Thus, while it insists that we include both labour movements and community movements in the same analysis, it also points to the distinct features marking their different regions in the landscape. Labour movements mobilize in the most institutionalized, routinized, and regulated region in the landscape, while community movements emerge in a region with limited organization and regulation. Labour movements mobilize employed workers, and their counterparts are employers; community movements mobilize heterogeneous constituencies, many unemployed, in relation to diverse authorities, though most usually the local government. The contrasting features of these two sites determine very different organizational forms, repertoires, and trajectories (see Alexander & Pfaff, 2013), accounting for some of the differences discussed below.

It is quite striking that each of the four mobilizations discussed in this article was originally rooted in some way or another in the Congress constellation of organizations, but from these beginnings pursued varied trajectories which positioned them at a greater or lesser distance from this constellation. The community mobilizations tended to remain within the Congress constellation, in contrast to the social movements which mobilized from outside. In both the labour movement post-Marikana and the student movement, new formations emerged beyond the Congress constellation, though large rumps remained within.

ANC traditions are reproduced, refashioned, and occasionally ruptured. Thus, both the social movements and the community protests reproduced earlier repertoires strongly associated with Congress traditions of collective action and illegality. The social movements became explicitly critical of the ANC and adopted a new discourse focused on anti-neo-liberalization and, in some cases, socialism. The new union formations and the EFF, which emerged or gained momentum from the Marikana strikes, tended to present themselves as the real custodians of the Congress vision and symbols such as the Freedom Charter, but refashioning these to emphasize elements that had been abandoned by the ANC, such as nationalization and socialism.

On the other hand, the mine workers who led the Marikana strikes were in some ways the most transgressive of all, profoundly rupturing the most institutionalized regions in the movement landscape in their rejection of established procedures and institutions of collective-bargaining, imploding the Congress-aligned mining union and joining a union aligned with a Black Consciousness federation. While the #FeesMustFall student movement tended to reproduce some of the repertoires of mass struggle, it gave birth to the most distinctive new symbols and discourses of the four cases presented here, appropriating previously marginalized Black Consciousness traditions and transforming them with a nascent Black Feminism and a commitment to intersectionality, thus marking a sharp break with ANC traditions.

It is notable that connections or expressions of solidarity were seldom established between the different organizations or movements involved in these four mobilizations, with each remaining more or less focused on grievances and authorities characteristic of their own specific regions of the landscape. This is not to say they did not influence each other. The imagery of Marikana in particular established a life of its own, being appropriated by a range of movements, from the students to community protesters to the EFF. It is also notable that violent tactics by protesters and police tended to emerge at certain points in all of these struggles. The lack of concrete links does not prevent mobilizations from sharing repertoires, symbols, and tactics.

Turning to organizational forms, the rejection of formal organizational structures in favour of temporary, ephemeral, and 'horizontal' organization emerges most strongly across the community protests, Marikana and some currents within #FeesMustFall – though echoed also within the social movement debates over organizational form – which appears to be at least in part a response to the conviction that formal organizational structures are inevitably co-opted and institutionalized, or appropriated by elites. Fluid forms of organization are preferred, marking a further break with Congress traditions of durable, centralized, and national organizations. While these tend to be absorbed into or replaced by formal structures such as trade unions or student organizations, they leave behind them possibilities, practices, and repertoires, always available for appropriation at some future time.

The analysis presented here, while tentative and selective, suggests that the manifold forms of collective mobilization and contention that have emerged in the post-apartheid movement landscape demonstrate a complex mix of trends, some tending to conserve and reproduce the existing landscape shaped and laid down by the histories of the Congress constellation of organizations, others drawing on these but reconfiguring and innovating at the level of both symbols and discourses, and organizational form. The weight and attraction of the Congress organizations, symbols, and repertoires remain powerful, yet there is considerable innovation on its margins. Some of these produce new practices, some continue to simmer or leave dormant forms that may re-emerge in new struggles, while others die out or are erased.

Levels of transgression are signalled by responses from elites – and here Marikana attracted the most concentrated physical and symbolic onslaught from within the state and the Congress constellation. Responses to the student movement were mixed, combining symbolic delegitimation with

concessions and attempts to reabsorb leadership. Indeed, attempts to delegitimize oppositional movements as ‘third force’ or ‘counterrevolutionary’ attempts to ‘destroy’ Congress or produce ‘regime change’ are the most consistent element in ANC responses, despite the fact that such movements are entirely legitimated by the Constitution. The movement landscape is thus deeply fractured in its origins, with the logic of the politics of liberation coming up against the logic of constitutional democracy, and while this produces contradictory strategies and responses by authorities, it also marks out tensions within the strategies of movements. The movement landscape thus appears as an unstable set of structures that is actively constituted, reconstituted, and contested, where some innovations establish new organizational nodes and repertoires or even become transgressive, while others are absorbed or erased.

One of the questions that emerges from this analysis is whether the Congress political tradition has been exhausted, or whether it still serves as a fecund source of ideas, symbols, and narratives that can nourish new struggles. It is as if the ANC colossus has begun to fracture and break apart, spewing fragments of itself across the landscape, each marked by its origins and history but also presenting new opportunities.

## Notes

1. Karl von Holdt writes: an idea encountered in a conversation with Laurence Cox at the annual Manchester ‘Alternative Futures and Popular Protest’ conference in 2014; it is intriguing to see how similarly our thinking has evolved in parallel since that discussion, though with significant differences of emphasis – see the references above. ‘Movement landscape’ provides a richly productive metaphor, and I am deeply indebted to Cox for sparking this exploration.
2. From here on, we use the term ‘Congress’ to refer to the broader set of organisations and traditions at the centre of which is the ANC, and ‘ANC’ to refer to the organisation so named.
3. The term ‘new social movements’ as used here does not correspond with its prior use in the context of Europe and North America. In South Africa, it became popular after 1998 in reference to a number of movements that emerged after 1994 and outside the old political formations.
4. Our use of the term ‘elite’ in this context is a relative one. In poor communities, such elite layers include some who are distinguished by wealth derived from local businesses or insertion into important regional networks of patronage; others simply possess some political capital by virtue of their history as ANC activists and location in one or other of the ANC constellation of organisations, and thus have some potential to claim patronage or dispense it on a small scale.
5. The Congress movement of the 1980s developed a strategy of organising in multiple ‘sites of struggle’, including schools and universities, combining struggles for specific changes in each such site with a national struggle to end apartheid.
6. Government reduced subsidies to universities in the late 1990s. Institutions of higher learning began to operate increasingly along business principles, with some of the results including rapidly and continually increasing student fees, and the contracting out (or outsourcing) of functions considered to be ‘support’ rather than ‘core’ services to private companies (Naidoo, 2006, 2009; Pendlebury & van der Walt, 2006).

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